

LETTERS

IN THESE TIMES is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

UNFAIR!

IN FAIRNESS TO RAYMONDA TAWIL, the Palestinian revolutionary activist whose autobiography I reviewed in tandem with three other books (*ITT*, March 26) and in fairness also to my own political integrity, I am compelled to reinstate the essence of one significant deletion made in my review.

Raymonda Tawil is internationally known for her advocacy of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis and for her activity to bring together for debate and dialog Palestinians, Arabs and Israelis holding highly controversial and differing views for the purpose of seeking common grounds between them. This aspect of Raymonda's activity, emphasized by my review, was left intact by your editor.

But an entire section was cut out of my review that establishes Raymonda Tawil also as a militant critic of an activist against current Israeli oppression in the occupied territories of Palestine. Deleted was mention of: 1) Raymonda's statement that after the 1967 war: "What I saw was no longer the Jewish people fighting for their survival, I was witnessing a Jewish conquest of our land." 2) Raymonda telling her Israeli military interrogator: "I respect your fight for your survival and dignity. You should respect ours." 3) Her participation in the Palestinian protest demonstrations inside the West Bank directed, as she describes and I reported, against specific current Israeli oppression. These include the official policy of demolishing what the occupation command designated as "guilty homes" of Palestinian families in reprisal against individual family members' actively opposing Israeli occupation and oppression; also the continued confiscation of land that, Raymonda notes, even when partially recompensed financially results in separation of the Palestinian peasants from their source of livelihood and from their roots.

These deletions distort her political stance into being only that of commitment to an eventual two-state coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians. The deletion of every reference I made to current Israeli government policies leaves the impression that I do not consider the present struggle important enough to mention. Such political editing is unfair to the reader, to the subject, to the reviewer.

-Peggy Dennis
Berkeley, Calif.

REDEFINING PORNOGRAPHY

KATE ELLIS WRAPS UP HER CRITICISM of New York's Women Against Pornography (WAP) by warning against "oversimplified cause and effect connections that WAP has drawn between media images and anti-social acts." In the rest of the article she brings up the group's acceptance of funding and support from questionable sources and associates it with a "Puritanism that is woven into the history of feminism," but the crux of her argument derives from her own definition of pornography, "the explicit representation of sexual acts aimed at arousal," a definition that is both overly simplified and misleading. Because pornography uses sex so blatantly it seems easy to assume that sex and not power is the point; the

focus of the feminist anti-pornography movement, however, is a redefinition of pornography from an analysis of the power relationships it exemplifies through violence.

To try to separate overtly violent pornography (as distasteful) from that which only objectifies women (as tolerable) is to ignore the position of women in this society. Ellis sees violence only in the actual torture of women, she does not see the violence implicit in a dominant culture portraying members of an oppressed culture as victims to be used. When a segment of society that wields great power over another segment of society spends \$4 billion a year on books, magazines and films that consistently portray (and thus define) the less powerful group as not only subservient but desiring and enjoying that subservience it is not illogical to conclude that men turn to pornography for more than sexual reassurance.

It seems reasonably liberal to oppose attacks on sexuality that diverge from the norm but to try to pass off bondage, as Ellis does, as simulated torture and something that one might be reluctant to pass judgement on is to turn a blind eye to the social ramifications of slave/master sexuality and the implication that what every woman secretly wants is to be bound and raped. Not only is rape a staple of all forms of pornography but in a recent study every one of the pornographic rape scenes surveyed portrayed the victim as first resisting but ultimately enjoying the assault.

In a recent study done at UCLA the reactions of men to an account of an actual rape were recorded. One group of men had previously read a fictional account of a rape in which the woman had enjoyed the attack. This group of men associated the victim's pain with pleasure; the more pain she was subjected to the more they became aroused. Fifty-one percent of this group later admitted that they would do what the rapist did "if they thought they could get away with it." The men in the control group, on the other hand were turned off by the victim's pain.

To men who are already predisposed to rape, pornography provides not only reassurance of the acceptability of their actions but also role models to pattern their actions after. A survey of convicted rapists found that 57 percent of those who had raped adult women had tried something they had read in pornography on their victims; 87 percent of the child rapists had done the same.

One of the images Ellis recalls from the WAP slide show is a picture of a woman's nipple being squeezed with a pair of pliers; that is the fantasy. The reality surfaced several weeks ago when two men were arrested for the murder of five teenage girls in Los Angeles. The victim's faces and breasts had been mutilated with a pair of pliers before they were strangled to death.

"Pornography is something done to women only indirectly," writes Kate Ellis. We beg to differ.

-Kendra Reinshagen
Robert Logan
Chicago

FOR THE RECORD

JUST FOR THE RECORD, A SLIGHT CORRECTION in Joanna Foley's article on the March 22 anti-draft demonstration is in order. To give credit where credit is due, the project organizing was initiated

by the Youth Section of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and by Frank Jackalone, national chair of the United States Student Association. Credit for the success of the action belongs to the hundreds of groups on campuses and communities across the country who turned out for the largest and most significant anti-war rally since Nixon's second inaugural.

-Patrick Laceyfield
National Coordinator, March 22
National Mobilization Against the Draft

IMAGINE!

JOHAN JUDIS, IN HIS WELL INTENTIONED essay "Carter-Reagan race can give Citizens Party space" (*ITT*, Apr. 2), says of the Citizens Party's chances of viability, "The party's *raison d'être* cannot be to provide picketers or demonstrators at this hospital closing or that trial.... There is little need for another national organization to meddle in local struggles... The Citizens Party should confine itself to statements and appearances so as to have the time and knowledge to perform the mundane tasks necessary to a political campaign—getting petition signatures, scheduling, canvassing, fund-raising, arranging events." And of the perspective for struggle in the course of the campaign, Judis says, "As a plan for 1980 it seems to reflect a lack of experience with election campaigns."

Sorry, John, yours is the lack of experience with election campaigns. Your advice is a plan for total irrelevance for the Citizens Party. The American people are not out there waiting with bated breath for Barry Commoner or some other personage to try to rescue them from 20 percent inflation and 40 percent black unemployment with trusty

mimeograph machines spewing forth position papers or glib statements.

It is precisely a campaign of struggle in which the candidates and the whole party on every level must identify with the people's concerns, find the causes, and move into action. Only that can begin to create in 1980 a place in the hearts and minds of the American people for the Citizens Party.

There is no contradiction in the two perspectives Judis points out: a presidential campaign or struggles over issues. If any criticism is due the national office of the party it is that too much time has been spent on "mundane" matters and that time has not been made for a visible, active struggle launched during the period leading up to the national convention.

Imagine coming into the convention in Cleveland with a party actively involved all over the country in mobilizing on every level to defeat the Carter/Rockefeller/Hoover budget cuts, and a party that had responded to the snub by all the Democratic and Republican candidates for president of the 1,000 black leaders meeting recently in Virginia to develop a black agenda, by arranging a meeting with that group in order to discuss putting that agenda before the convention for discussion and action; or a party that had similarly reached out to the women's movement for a discussion of their agenda for inclusion in a major way in the convention.

No, there is only one perspective for the Citizens Party around which all the leadership and the entire membership can unite. That is to build the Citizens Party of and with the people in the course of struggling for the rights and needs of all.

-Jack Greenspan
Elizabeth, N.J.

CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is \$10.00 for two insertions and \$5.00 for each additional insert, for copy of 40 words or less (additional words are 35¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of Bill Rehm.

April 25-27/Portland, OR

13th Annual Pacific Northwest Labor History Conference. Special guests: David Brody and Victor Reuther. For information contact: PNLHA, P.O. Box 25048, Northgate Station, Seattle, WA 98125.

April 26/San Francisco, CA

March for Survival. Assemble at 10 a.m. in Union Square. March to Dolores Park for 1:00 p.m. rally. Speakers are John George, Dennis Banks, Barbara Haber and Fernando Guerrero. Plus entertainment. Contributions invited—Volunteers needed. Contact Claire at 752-7766.

Washington, DC

March for a Non-Nuclear World, a national anti-nuclear demonstration. We have buses leaving from Chicago at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, April 25—only \$45.00 roundtrip. Call CANP at 472-2492 or 786-9041 for details.

April 26-28/Washington, DC

Coalition for a Non-Nuclear World Rally. There will be march on Washington April 26 and a non-violent civil disobedience demonstration at the Department of Energy on April 28. For more information contact: Coalition for a Non-Nuclear World, 413 8th St., SE, Washington, DC 20003, (202)544-5228.

April 28-May 3/Nationwide

Anti-Draft Week activities around the country include registration/conscription resistance and education, films, speakers and debates on the issues of

registration, conscription, the defense budget, the arms race and foreign policy. For further information contact: The May 4th Organizing Committee, P.O. Box 431, Arcata, CA 95521, (707) 822-4427.

May 1/Berkeley, CA

Benefit dinner for the Highlander Research and Education Center honoring Rosa Parks and Septima Clark. Hs. Lordships on the Berkeley Marina. Tax deductible tickets \$25.00, available from East Bay Friends of Highlander, 1019 Oxford, Berkeley, CA 94707.

May 2-3/Sonoma State Univ., CA

Democracy in the Workplace Conference. The focus is on legislation, labor issues and practical experiences. Speakers include Jack Blackburn, Joe Blasi, Martin Carnoy, Steve Deutsch, David Olsen, Carol Pateman, Derek Shearer and others. For information call or write Robert Girling, Dept. of Management Studies, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA 94928, (707) 664-2377. Admission is \$5.00.

May 3/Chicago, IL

Chicago Murals Tour by Cindy Weiss for the Second City Socialist School. Meet at 1:30 at the NAM office, 3244 N. Clark, Chicago. \$2.00. Call: (312) 871-7700 for reservations by April 30.

Chicago, IL

The Battle of Chile, Part 3, "The Power of the People." The dramatic conclusion of the most monumental political documentary of our time will be presented on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. at Jones Commercial High School, 606 S. State. Donation is \$4.00.

Chicago, IL

Folksinger and labor organizer **Si Kahn** will give a benefit concert for the Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. at 333 S. Ashland. Call 975-3680 for tickets—\$5.00 in advance and \$6.00 at the door.

May 4/New York, NY

"A Jewish Agenda for the '80s" will be the theme for Jewish Currents Annual Dinner with guest speaker **Professor Itche Goldberg.** At 8:30 p.m. at the Roosevelt Hotel, 45th St. at Madison.

SUSAN COWELL

Five years later the myth of Indochina is revived

THE WAR IN INDOCHINA WAS ONCE SEEN AS A TURNING point in American history—the end of American imperialism and of the myth of American innocence. Five years after the last of the American presence departed Saigon with unseemly haste, the Vietnam war has become history. It is being packaged, as history inevitably will be, into clichés, images and “truths” for present and future use. ¶The popular media has begun to address what Vietnam did to us: *Friendly Fire* and *Coming Home* about those at home, *Apo-*

calypse Now and *The Deerhunter* on Americans there. What we did to them remains a largely taboo subject. *Vietnam: An American Journey*, a professionally-made documentary on Vietnam's difficult recovery, never found its rightful place on public television. William Shawcross' *Sideshow*, a well-reviewed and important account of America's role in Cambodia, could not compete with Henry Kissinger's version on the sales charts.

Renewed violence in Indochina has forced the news media to face again the realities of that corner of the world. But rather than acknowledge our contribution to the destruction of Indochinese society, the recent tragedies have been used as *ex post facto* exonerations. As *Time* magazine put it, “The psychological effect on Americans...is to lift a lot of the moral burden off the American involvement” (4/19).

The shifting of responsibility is reflected in the language used by the “serious” corporate media. Our war in Indochina is portrayed as a phenomenon of nature—a quagmire, in the classic phrase. Its expansion was allegedly an impersonal pro-

cess beyond the control of participants; deliberate acts of escalation are thus glossed over or ignored. In contrast, the Indochinese regimes that came to power in 1975 are portrayed as active, even willful, participants, bearing full responsibility for post-war problems.

The *New York Times* describes the impact of the American bombing of Vietnam in euphemistic and passive under-

tion because there blame can be placed squarely on Pol Pot and on the Vietnamese invasion. The American contribution to the devastation of that country is overlooked or referred to obliquely. Cambodia was “drawn inexorably into the maelstrom of the Vietnam war” as “the Vietnam war began spilling over into Cambodian territory” (NYT 1/79). Cambodia “became engulfed by the Indochina war in 1970” (Time 10/79).

The Khmer Rouge, however, is not allowed the excuse of being overtaken by a spreading disaster. Its acts appear arbitrary and willful; Cambodia was “ravaged for ideological reasons by its former rulers” (NYT 8/79). In a pattern established in news coverage of the early years of the Chinese revolution, the enemy is not only portrayed as evil but also as all-powerful. A *Time* magazine article headlined “Pol Pot's Lifeless Zombies” reported, “In an effort to create a radically new kind of human being, Pol Pot's Communist fanatics turned their subjects into zombie-like creatures whose will and capacity for human feeling seem all but extinguished” (12/79).

Along with the watered-down versions of pre-1975 destruction comes a romanticized picture of wartime Saigon and Phnom Penh. Largely isolated from the full impact of the war, these French-built cities offered old-fashioned colonial amenities to the Americans and their collaborators. Reporters who return to

West on the Saigon River. But you can still get coffee, and the smiles of the passing girls are as dandy a note to tropical politics as ever” (WP 8/78).

A *New York Times* reporter shared his attitude and his eye for the girls: “The flotsam and chaos of the debacle were no longer in evidence. But the variety and color of life that once made Saigon one of the most fascinating cities of the world were also gone...Private cars have all but disappeared. The change in the appearance of Saigon's women is one of the most striking. Imported luxuries and the mountains of black market American supplies have disappeared, and women no longer wear cosmetics. The *ao dai* dress, whose vivid colors and flowing lines gave a special character to Saigon's women, has been replaced by the white blouses and pants of the countryside” (NYT 4/79).

From Phnom Penh a *Time* correspondent reported on the changes. “In once elegant residential neighborhoods, most of the villas are now hollow hulks;... [in a hotel] the unused swimming pool is filled with dirty water, prompting speculation that it has not been changed since the days of Lon Nol” (12/79).

For Vietnamese and Cambodians these same luxuries meant prostitution, drugs, the black market. They were symbols of the inequality, corruption and dependence on foreigners which the guerrilla movements fought. When similar symbols and resentments fueled the popular uprising in Iran, Americans were again caught by surprise.

The war in Indochina is being treated as a trauma in American history, a disaster we unwittingly stumbled into and then emerged older and more cynical. Along with the assassinations and race riots, it has become another image of the '60s as the decade that ended American idealism. But the experience has not made the rest of the world any more real. Indochina is still just another uncivilized part of an incomprehensible world. It is one of those “turbulent places in Africa, Asia and Latin America where,” in the phrase of *New York Times* columnist James Reston, “anything can happen in the night” (NYT 11/79).

American innocence and good intentions are once again being posed against Vietnamese evil.

statement: “substantial tracts of land [were] made fallow by the war” (5/77). The Vietnamese, on the other hand, are depicted as deliberately disrupting their own economy: “Vietnam's dogmatic design to make the south like the north...has meant the dismantling of a highly developed system of production and distribution” (NYT 3/79).

Cambodia has received more atten-

tion because there blame can be placed

these cities are haunted by nostalgia. In the words of a UPI reporter in the *Washington Post*: “This city holds a host of memories for Americans who knew it as Saigon before the 1975 Communist takeover. The silver coffee service is gone from the veranda of the Continental Hotel, where Graham Greene and other Westerners once sat pondering the 30 bloody years of East meeting

GIUSEPPE BOFFA

A real revolution needs no foreign military help

THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY, AMONG OTHERS IN Western Europe, has condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The following article by Giuseppe Boffa, veteran correspondent for the PCI newspaper *l'Unita*, does not directly address the Soviet action, but is primarily aimed at debunking the idea that the pro-Soviet government in Afghanistan came to power as the result of a popular revolution.

The article was published in *l'Unita* Jan. 27. ¶For communists, the word “revolution” is the most serious in a political vocabulary. So we try not to use it incorrectly. A real revolutionary process moves millions of people to take extraordinary steps. It has been the most important, and the most characteristic feature of 20th century history.

But long, painful experience has taught us that calling oneself a revolutionary does not make one be that, and that this is even more true of those who call themselves Marxists, or Marxist-Leninists.

For a struggle to be revolutionary it must involve the masses in struggle for their own emancipation. No “vanguard” party can play this role without the support of the masses of the people. This was one of Lenin's fundamental premises, and is one of the fundamental premises of Leninism.

We knew very little about the people's democratic party, which took power in Afghanistan in April 1978. It did not disturb us that it took full control of the Afghanistan government (in which it had

participated from 1973) by means of a political-military *putsch*: all governments in Afghanistan's recent history have been formed that way. But we tried hard to understand how the new leaders would try to create ties with the various social forces in Afghanistani society. But not even the Soviet press ever published an analysis of which classes supported the pro-Soviet regime, or how it organized progressive social tendencies.

They say: but they instituted agrarian reforms. The expression tells us little... even the Shah of Iran spoke of agrarian reforms. Could he pass as a revolutionary? In Afghanistan, distribution of the land did not change class relationships, because there are immense territories of free arid land. The power of the rich is based on their control of water, waterways and instruments of production, not land. A mechanical division of the land as decided in Kabul was not a reform. It prevented people from working with the

old system, but without offering the possibility of working in a new way. No support was given by the peasants. In fact, the “reforms” provoked their hostility and caused them to support their class enemies. According to information from many different sources, including our own correspondent, this is what happened in Afghanistan.

The same thing was repeated in other sectors. The apparent radicalism of certain measures—substitution of the flag, official atheism, co-education in the schools without the creation of schooling on a mass basis did not create ties with the people, but masked the lack of such ties. The isolation in a country where hostility was evidently growing induced the government leadership...to seek foreign support and to import abstract and ineffective solutions. The isolation also provoked breaks and divisions among government leaders. A few months following the April *putsch*, one entire wing of the party was already being persecuted and driven into exile. This is the way to produce another Pol Pot, not the way to make a revolution.

To believe that the remedy for such a situation is foreign military intervention is worse than illusion. There were already Soviet advisers in growing numbers but their presence had produced no brilliant results. On the other hand, whatever good intentions the new political leadership has, having arrived together with the foreign troops, its credibility was destroyed among the people who, illiterate and poor, have long been known to feel deeply about independence from foreign influence.

The simple division of the world into “two camps” in each of which the people must line up in orderly and disciplined manner, is not an answer and certainly not a revolutionary answer, because it does not work in today's world. It was inadequate in 1947, even though the “cold war” of that period can explain the origin of that blueprint. In

fact, it was necessary to drop that analysis a few years later because it could no longer contain the impetuous development of anti-imperialist struggle.

If Tito's serious illness these days can create such intense emotion all over the world, it is because he was among the first to reject this mechanical position without renouncing the ideal of socialism. The world has undergone profound changes; thousands of other sources of struggles for emancipation have appeared on the scene and very few of these accept the concept of alignment in “one or the other” camps—a concept that ends by supporting “Big Power” politics.

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